

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 05740 311137Z

17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

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R 311000Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4594

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

US NATO 1324

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 5740

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL YO UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET SHIP VISIT

REF : USDAO BELGRADE MSG 5713 DTG 301004 Z OCT 75 (NOTAL)

1. IN MOST IMPRESSIVE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN ADRIATIC TO DATE, A THREE-SHIP SOVIET NAVAL SQUADRON COMPOSED OF THE HELICOPTER CARRIER MOSKOVA, THE NEWEST (BUILT 1973) AND MOST IMPRESSIVE CLG MP CLASS CRUISER IN FLEET, AND FOXTROT CLASS SUBMARINE, ARRIVED AT DUBROVNIK MORNING OF OCTOBER 30 FOR SHIP VISIT. VISIT ITSELF WAS NO SURPRISE; EMBASSY LEARNED ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE AND REPORTED IT BY DIA CHANNELS. HOWEVER, WE HAD NO WARNING THAT CRUISER WOULD TAKE PART. IT WAS APPARENTLY SUBSTITUTED FOR A DESTROYER WHICH WAS IN ORIGINAL PLANS.

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR WHY SOVIETS WOULD WANT TO INCLUDE CRUISER. FIRST, SOVIETS WOULD LOGICALLY WANT TO SHOW OFF NEW, SENSATIONAL ITEM IN ARSENAL. ALSO POSSIBLE THAT ESCALATION

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PAGE 02 BELGRA 05740 311137Z

OF SHIP SIZE AND FIREPOWER MIGHT BE SOVIET ATTEMPT TO

USA A LITTLE SABRE-RATTLING TO INTIMIDATE YUGOSLAVS, WHOSE CURRENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST COMINFORMISM HAS BROUGHT SOVIETS IN FOR CONSIDERABLE INDIRECT CRITICISM WITH MORE OF DIRECT NATURE TO COME WHEN RUMORED TRIALS OF COMINFORMISTS TAKE PLACE. FINALLY, SOVIETS MAY BE TRYING TO GRADUALLY INCREASE SIZE OF THEIR SHIP VISITS AS MEANS OF ESTABLISHING A REGULAR AND CREDIBLE NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE ADRIATIC AS A COUNTERTHRUST TO NAVOCFORMED EXERCISE THERE LAST YEAR. BY INCREASING SIZE OF SHIP VISITS, WHILE US CONTINUES TO SEND ONE OR TWO SHIPS AT MOST OF LOWER TONNAGE AND FIREPOWER, SOVIETS WOULD GET YUGOSLAV ACQUISENCE FOR A REGULAR AND SIZABLE PRESENCE IN THE ADRIATIC WHOLLY WITHIN LIMITS SET BY 1974 SHIP VISIT LAW, SINCE YUGOSLAVS WOULD HAVE NO BASIS FOR DENYING THEM.

3. ALUSNA IS ON SCENE AT DUBROVNIK. WE WILL REPORT BY FOLLOW-UP CABLE HIS OBSERVATIONS PLUS ADDITIONAL YUGOSLAV PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS TO VISIT WHICH WE HOPE TO ELICIT AFTER SOVIET SHIP DEPART.
SILBERMAN

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